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NSC BRIEFING

6 April 1954

POLITICAL MOTIVATION FOR FRENCH REQUEST FOR  
NAVAL AIR SUPPORT

I. New phase in French position on intervention

A. Charge of Chinese intervention not made by French before 4 April request though obviously known for months.

B. Dien Bien Phu has apparently convinced French drastic steps necessary to ensure Geneva position.

1. French now recognize permanent loss of privileged position in Indochina.

2. Alternatives if Geneva fails:

a. A Dunkirk -- militarily infeasible

b. Negotiations with a strong No

c. ~~UK intervention -- slow~~

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and uncertain.

d. American intervention

3. Dien Bien Phu and imminence

of Geneva counterbalance fear of

provoking Chinese attacks.

II. If US rejects request:

A. France would be freer at Geneva

to make concessions -- EDC as well as

Indochina

B. France could better press for US

concessions at Geneva.

III. If US is involved militarily:

A. US position then same as on Korean

truce talks.

B. French public more amenable to war.

C. France could turn operation over

to US if conference failed.

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